



**CITY OF SUNNYVALE
REPORT
Planning Commission**

October 6, 2003

SUBJECT: 2001-0612 - Downtown Specific Plan and Associated Zoning Code Amendments

Resolution Adoption of the Downtown Specific Plan;

Introduction of an Ordinance Amend Definitions in Chapter 19.12 and Downtown Specific Plan Chapter 19.28 of the Sunnyvale Municipal Code

REPORT IN BRIEF

The Downtown Specific Plan and associated Zoning Code Amendments are the last step in the process to update the land uses and development standards in the downtown area. The first formal action occurred on June 17, 2003 when the City Council certified the Downtown Improvement Program Update Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and adopted General Plan Amendments to the downtown area to revise land uses and heights.

This Specific Plan builds on the General Plan land uses and heights and provides more specific direction about public and private improvements, including goals and policies, building design guidelines, and infrastructure improvements. Staff worked with private consultants and the public to develop the design guidelines listed in Chapter 5. In addition, the Zoning Code has been updated to reflect permitted land uses and applicable development standards. These Zoning Code updates are listed in Attachment B.

Staff recommends that both the updated Downtown Specific Plan and Zoning Code Amendments be approved.

BACKGROUND

On June 17, 2003, the City Council certified an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) and adopted General Plan Amendments to the downtown area to incorporate revised land uses, intensities and building heights. This action was the result of a two-year process of working with the community to update the vision for the future downtown. As part of that action, Council directed staff to update the Downtown Specific Plan and Zoning Code amendments to reflect with the revised General Plan.

EXISTING POLICY

Land Use and Transportation Element

Policy C1.2 *Encourage nodes of interest and activity, such as parks, public open spaces, well planned development, mixed use projects, and other desirable uses, locations and physical attractions.*

Action Statement C1.2.1 Promote downtown as a unique place that is interesting and accessible to the whole City and the region.

Community Design Sub-element

Action Statement 2.5A.2d. Continue to identify and adopt methods of preserving historic resources and special districts.

Action Statement 2.5A.3f. Strengthen the downtown as the visual as well as functional focus of Sunnyvale.

Action Statement 2.5A.3g. Consider design features that help locate the downtown district and emphasize the roadways and intersections leading downtown.

Action Statement 2.5D.2b. Continue to provide courtyards and public plazas around City buildings and encourage at least one large plaza downtown.

1993 Downtown Specific Plan

- **General Goal 1** *To establish the downtown as the cultural, retail, financial, and entertainment center of the community, complemented by employment, housing and transit opportunities.*
- **General Goal 2** *To develop the land uses adopted by the City Council in November, 1990 in an attractive and cohesive physical form which clearly identifies Sunnyvale's Downtown.*

The Community Development Strategy is an administrative document used by staff to allocate resources to meet general plan goals and budget outcomes. This Strategy that was finalized in February 2003 and includes goals for:

- *Retaining and attracting retail services*
- *Preserving service businesses*
- *Providing opportunities and incentives for the construction of new residences*

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

As part of the Downtown Improvement Program Update, the City prepared a Program Environmental Impact Report ("the Program EIR") pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") to consider and analyze the environmental impacts related to the Project, including adoption of amendments to the Land Use and Transportation Element of the General Plan, the Downtown Specific Plan and the Zoning Code. The Program EIR was certified by the Council at its June 17, 2003 meeting (Resolution No. 123-03), where Council found that it presented an adequate and extensive assessment of the environmental impacts of the Project, and adopted a statement of overriding considerations related to certain impacts on traffic and air quality, and adopted a mitigation monitoring program. The proposed amendments to the Downtown Specific Plan and Zoning Code are components of and consistent with the Project analyzed in the Program EIR, therefore, no additional review is required. The Downtown Specific Plan and Zoning Code amendments are subject to the Mitigation Monitoring Program adopted by the Council for the Project.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of a Specific Plan is to create a program to systematically implement the General Plan. Specific Plans typically include land use information, goals and policies, design guidelines and development standards and procedures for implementing necessary infrastructure, transportation or other improvements.

To update the Specific Plan, information was incorporated from the 1993 Downtown Specific Plan, the 2002 Downtown Design Plan, and updated ideas and information from City staff and the public. City staff held outreach meetings with the public and worked with the architectural consultants ELS to help develop the design guidelines.

The 2003 Downtown Specific Plan provides more detail about the way land uses will be developed in the downtown, as well as descriptions of street designs, building design guidelines, and information on public utilities. The draft plan was distributed to the Planning Commission on Friday, September 12, 2003. Minor changes have been made to the plan since it was distributed. The changes are noted in Attachment D by the underscored language. Otherwise it remains the same.

The Zoning Code has also been updated to reflect these changes. Permitted land uses and numeric development standards are listed in the Zoning Code, and development standards are reprinted in the Downtown Specific Plan for ease of administration. The revised Zoning Code is enclosed in Attachment B. This language is conceptual, and will be fine-tuned prior to the Council hearing.

Of particular note are the regulations for height. The current Zoning code measures height from the top of curb to the height point of the roof.

Mechanical equipment is allowed to exceed the height limit, providing it is less than 25% of the roof area. At the June Council hearing, staff understood that the height limits in Block 1a for the residential uses and in Block 18 for the movie theaters were created to accommodate any mechanical equipment. For that reason, a special footnote is listed saying that the height limit in those blocks includes any proposed mechanical equipment.

The Specific Plan and proposed amendments to the Zoning Code have been drafted to reflect the densities and uses established in the General Plan amendment adopted by Council on Jun 17, 2003, Resolution No. 123-03. IN the event the General Plan is further amended, these documents will need to be revised to reflect that action. In addition, staff will be returning in several weeks with the proposed zoning amendments for the eastern adjacent residential sites. These sites were designated with low-medium density intensities.

PUBLIC CONTACT

Staff held two outreach meetings with the public on August 14th and 28th on the Downtown Design Guidelines. The first meeting discussed primarily the commercial blocks in the downtown core and the second meeting discussed residential design concepts in the outlying districts. To advertise these meetings, staff sent regular mail and email to every community member who had attended a previous downtown meeting, as well as the Chamber of Commerce and the Sunnyvale Downtown Association. Slides were posted on KSUN and a press release was posted on the internet. Approximately 10 to 15 people attended each meeting. Staff received helpful direction from the public in terms of what their priorities are for downtown design. These ideas are incorporated into the design guidelines (see Attachment C for a list of comments received and where this feedback has been incorporated).

FISCAL IMPACT

Staff time for preparation and review of the Specific Plan and Zoning Code, as well as time previously spent on the Downtown Design Plan, EIR and General Plan Amendments have been accomplished through operating budgets. Consultant assistance has been funded through Council approved special projects. State law allows a city to charge development for the costs associated with the preparation and administration of Specific Plans and related EIRs. Staff is not recommending that Council impose a fee for the preparation and administration of this Specific Plan.

ALTERNATIVES

1. Recommend that the Council approve the Downtown Specific Plan and Zoning Code Amendments.
2. Recommend that the Council approve the Downtown Specific Plan and Zoning Code Amendments with modifications.
3. Recommend that the Council approve the Downtown Specific Plan and

Zoning Code Amendments in concept and return to Planning Commission for approval of the final document pre-publication.

4. Recommend that the Council do not approve the Downtown Specific Plan and Zoning Code Amendments and direct staff as to where modifications need to be made.

RECOMMENDATION

Alternative 1.

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Approved by:

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Attachments

- A. Draft Downtown Specific Plan 2003 (distributed previously)
- B. Revised Zoning Code Amendments
- C. Notes for Outreach Meetings for Downtown Design Guidelines

D. Corrections made to Downtown Specific Plan since 9/12/03.

***Notes from Commercial Downtown Design Guidelines Meeting
August 14, 2003***

Comment	Applicable Guidelines
1. Ground floor needs to relate to people on the street 2. Use arcades, loggias 3. Focus/spend money on ground floor 4. Minimum 10 ft. width of arcade 5. Don't use fake materials, like fake stucco or fake brick 6. As you go up, give windows nice frames 7. Use dormers on top or towers on the corner 8. Avoid oversized detailing 9. Use simple shapes	B.10 B.12 B.13 B.20 B.16 B.25 – B.30
10. Are we looking for any style in particular?	No specific architectural style required. See B.4 and B.5
11. Fourth building of all brick looks monolithic, like a tenement 12. Many people like the pleasantness of Murphy Square 13. Likes the design of the Mountain View district around the train station 14. Whatever criteria you use for commercial, carry it over to the residential areas "not identical, but not contrasting"	
15. In an urban environment, you look for common threads "rhythm" 16. Top middle base 17. First story, base of building, arcade 18. Middle course, French doors, French balconies 19. Variety of design	B.7 B.9 B.10 B.12 B.13
20. Doesn't want cookie cutter development, wants a more organic look 21. Separate parcels are good to create design variety	Pg. 9 B.1 (pg. 28) B.3
22. Wider sidewalks are important	See Streetscape Designs, Appendix A
23. It's important to blend new development to existing development around it.	B.5 (pg. 28)
24. Look for historic pictures of Sunnyvale for ideas	B.4 (pg.28)
25. There's nothing in the guidelines to discourage corporate architecture	B.6 (pg. 28)
26. Provide public bathrooms?	
27. Parking garage entrance is nice at Santana Row but too large	
28. Want underground parking to allow more vistas and pedestrian environments 29. Units adjacent to garage are not desirable	
30. You can move the utility corridor underneath the mall to allow for underground parking	
31. Underground parking allows for plazas above	
32. Where would tenant parking be?	
33. Stop Signs, traffic lights, we want to keep mall open to pedestrians only	Vision statement to encourage pedestrian-friendly environments. See Streetscape

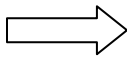
Comment	Applicable Guidelines
	standards
34. Can't speed down streets – need to slow traffic	See Commercial Core district description
35. No one knows where to find the mall. Wider streets bring attention to that. 36. Important to protect neighborhood architecture 37. We should not allow neon signs	Appendix A, Streetscape Standards for McKinley Avenue Extension. See District Description for South of Iowa, Chapter 6.
38. Even pavement on the street to create flexibility in the streets	Considered – but there are public works and accessibility concerns with this idea.
39. Mountain View and Palo Alto have main thoroughfares – McKinley isn't like that.	
40. Charging for parking discourages people from coming	
41. Great idea to have street and sidewalk even	See response to comment 38.
42. We need to allow pedestrians ability to cut through blocks when possible	Policies on re-establishing the street grid and specific pedestrian connections in Ch 7
43. Office along Mathilda creates too much traffic	
44. Providing bicycle facilities	See Chapter 7, Bicycle Facilities

***Notes from Residential Downtown Design Guidelines Meeting
August 28, 2003***

Comments	Guidelines
1. Like the picture with first story brick and decks on top	See Encouraged Building Materials Pg. 29
2. Would like some landscaping in the front	
3. Prefer variation in color for the units	
4. Whisman station is not a good example	
5. Big porches are good	
6. Contemporary, modern style is "not Sunnyvale"	Pg. 9 and B.4
7. Likes the town homes on the corner of Sunnyvale-Saratoga and Crawford Drive	
8. Like to create impression of separate units through colors and design, not one monolithic building	
9. Concerned about the neighborhood looking too new, want to incorporate historical architectural styles	B.4
10. Area south of Iowa should match some of the historical homes in the area	Pg. 10

General Favorites:

Three-story attached housing with brick material on the first floor, decks above, and a variety of steep roof pitches.



Two story with possible lofts on third floor. Lots of popouts, bay windows and pleasant streetscape. Very close setback with stairs leading from the entryway.



Detached homes with craftsman styles. Large porches, Craftsman and architectural detailing were well-liked.

